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Agenda items 20, 105 and 110
STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES: QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 11 January 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit a press release issued on 9 January 1999 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea on the continuing death toll of Eritreans in detention camps in Ethiopia. The Government of Ethiopia continues to grossly violate the human rights of Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin with impunity. Although such Ethiopian crimes are amply verified by independent bodies, the international community has hitherto taken no action to stop these crimes. How many more have to die before Ethiopia is called to account for its actions against innocent lives?

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly under agenda items 20, 105 and 110, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Haile MENKERIOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Press release concerning deaths of Eritreans in Ethiopian detention camps, issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea on 9 January 1999

The death list of innocent Eritreans detained in the Blatten concentration camp and other prisons in Ethiopia is increasing from time to time.

The number of Eritreans dying in detention camps in Ethiopia is much higher than was officially reported to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Yosief Ghebreab Zecarias and Fesscha Hannes are the latest and unaccounted victims of this inhumane treatment.

Yosief Ghebreab Zecarias was 25 years old and engaged in business activities in Ethiopia until he was put in Blatten concentration camp by the Ethiopian authorities. Fesscha Hannes was living a peaceful life until he was detained and brutally beaten to death by the Tigre People's Liberation Army (TPLF) cadres in prison camps in Tigray. He was the father of four children.

The Government of Eritrea has been calling repeatedly on the international community to ensure the release of the innocent Eritreans in detention in Ethiopia and for the investigation of the causes of death of those who have perished in those prison camps. But so far, the calls have fallen on deaf ears.

Similarly, the wholesale deportation of Eritreans on the basis of their ethnicity and the confiscation of their property continues without let-up. To date, over 48,000 Eritreans have been deported from Ethiopia. In the circumstances, the Government of Eritrea once again calls on the international community to deplore these gross violations of human rights and to ensure the immediate release of the Eritreans languishing in Ethiopian prison camps.